

Rediscovering Democracy:

An Agenda for Action



Civic Literacy
Initiative of
Kentucky

Kentucky
UNBRIDLED SPIRIT™

Rediscovering Democracy: An Agenda for Action

Kentucky's vision for increased civic education stems from the first Congressional Conference on Civic Education in September of 2003. The goal of the five-annual conferences is to help strengthen our democracy by furthering the general public's engagement in the civic and political affairs of the nation. The Conference, sponsored by the Alliance for Representative Democracy, is in part, guided by research presented in *The Civic Mission of Schools*, a 2003 report from Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE: The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.

The series of conferences initiated a national movement through state action teams to enact strategic plans for strengthening civic education at the state and local levels, making the guiding principles of the Civic Mission of Schools a reality. These guiding principles included the Six Promising Approaches to Civic Education:

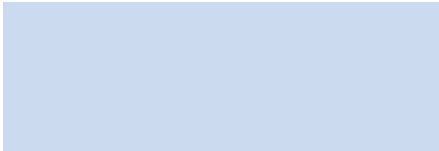
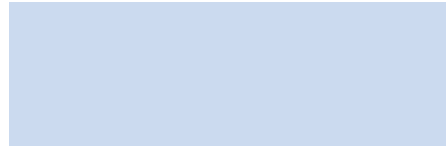
1. Provide instruction in government, history, law, and democracy;
2. Incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives;
3. Design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction;
4. Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities;
5. Encourage student participation in school governance; and
6. Encourage students' participation in simulation of democratic processes and procedures.

Kentucky’s state action team: Chief Justice Joseph Lambert; Secretary of State Trey Grayson; Senator Jack Westwood; Representative Tanya Pullin; Professor Natalie Stiglitz, University of Louisville; Robin Chandler, Kentucky Department of Education; Professor Polly Page, Northern Kentucky University; and Dr. Deborah Williamson, Administrative Office of the Courts, joined with others in the state to form the Kentucky Workgroup on Civic Literacy and Engagement.

The Workgroup serves as the driving force behind the Civic Literacy Initiative of Kentucky (CLIK), a multi-year effort to enhance civic literacy and engagement in the Commonwealth.

Over the last two years, the Workgroup released *Rediscovering Democracy: A Report on the Kentucky Summit on Civic Literacy*, partnered with KET and the Center for Civic Education to produce a professional development video on Project Citizen, led the effort to form the Southern Coalition for Civic Literacy and Engagement, and held two statewide summits and 11 regional meetings. The regional meetings served as a tool to educate community members about the CLIK, showcase local civic education initiatives, and provide a forum in which to gather data from participants regarding their perspectives on civic literacy and engagement.

Based on the data collected through the regional meetings and state summits as well as *The Civic Mission of Schools*, the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress civics assessment, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, and the Education Commission of the States, the Workgroup developed multiple recommendations for improving civic literacy and civic engagement in the Commonwealth.



Civic Education Resources

Currently, there is a large amount of civic information available throughout the Commonwealth. Kentucky's educators need a central location from which to gather this civic knowledge, data, and resources.

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION

- **Establish the Kentucky Center for Civic Excellence in partnership with state universities or colleges.** The Center will serve as a resource for enhancing and increasing civic literacy and civic engagement in the Commonwealth. It will reach out to community organizations, P-16 schools, and alternative learning programs by interacting with and educating students, teachers, administrators, state education leaders and community members, as well as collect data and provide research.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Support for teachers:

- Post civic materials and resources such as books, websites, organizations, videos, and lesson plans on the Kentucky Center for Civic Excellence website.
- Create an on-line forum on the Kentucky Center for Civic Excellence website for teachers to share ideas.
- Create a list of elected officials who are willing to visit elementary, middle, and high schools, colleges and universities, and adult education classes.
- Create an elementary level civic book list for teachers that includes discussion questions.
- Produce lesson plans that are aligned to Kentucky's standards and assessment.
- Design a social studies and civics tool kit for the middle school level that is similar to the KET arts tool kit.

Utilize existing programs:

- Encourage the use of the University of Virginia Center for Politics Youth Leadership Initiative, America's Legislators Back to School Program, We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution, Project Citizen, and the Harvard University CIVICS Program.

- Encourage the use of KET Encyclomedia, an on-line teaching tool, in the classroom.
- Design model programs that use gifted and talented students identified as gifted in leadership to plan, organize, and implement school wide initiatives in civic literacy and engagement.
- Use community education grants for civic literacy and engagement projects.

Create informational pamphlets:

- Work with the New Cities Institute to compile information on local and state government for distribution to schools, families, and community organizations.

Civic Programs and Curriculum

Kentucky students need exposure to civics education throughout P-16 education. This is nowhere more evident than in the high school curriculum where there is a dearth of civics courses. Furthermore, students need to apply the principles they learn within the classroom to a variety of extracurricular activities.

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION

- **Implement a pilot study of a high school government and civics course that integrates both civic literacy and civic engagement at the local, state, and federal level.** The course will be posted as an offering with Kentucky Virtual High School and implemented at approximately 10 regional pilot sites. An evaluation of the pilot will be conducted to measure the alignment of the course and its outcomes with recommendations provided by the National Council for Social Studies and the Civic Mission of Schools.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluate curriculum:

- Locate funding for a study on current practices in government and civics teaching in Kentucky.
- Target School Boards and Site Based Decision Making Councils to add government and civics as a high school course.

- Incorporate current events into curriculum.
- Develop innovative ways to incorporate civics into other subject areas such as science, math, and reading.
- Enhance civic and government courses required for a social studies teacher certification.
- Incorporate government and civics into American History classes.

Integrate service learning:

- Emphasize the connection between service learning and civics.
- Require a service learning reflection piece in elementary, middle, and high school writing portfolios.
- Encourage schools to participate in distance learning opportunities and mission trips.
- Develop and engage all students in mentoring programs with local professionals and community members.
- Encourage the use of the NKU Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement as a resource on service learning.

Utilize existing programs:

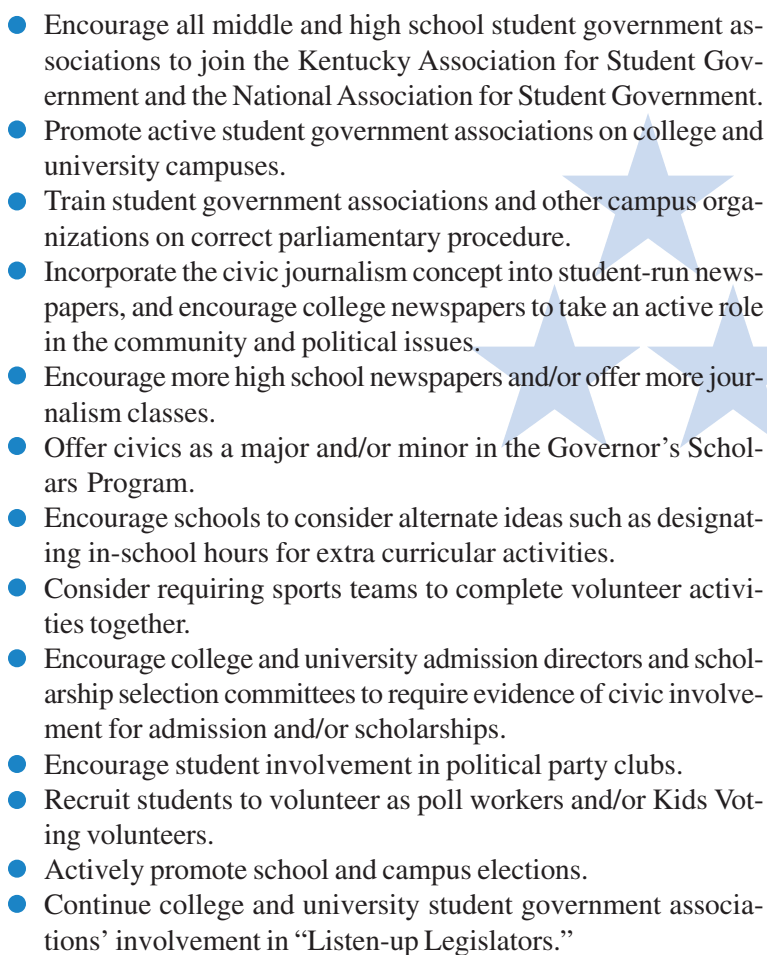
- Incorporate existing civic programs such as We the People into current adult education classes and homeschool programs.
- Continue postsecondary institutions' involvement in Campus Compact and American Democracy Project.
- Encourage the use of the Junior Achievement program in elementary and middle schools.
- Incorporate the annual High School Voter Slogan and Essay Contest into current social studies classes.

Create new programs:

- Develop civic programs and curriculum for adult education classes and homeschoolers via the Kentucky Center for Civic Excellence.
- Encourage the use of Abraham Lincoln's bicentennial as a teaching opportunity.
- Partner with the Kentucky Association for Academic Competition to develop an annual civics and government competition.

Extra curricular activities:

- Encourage students to participate in mock trial, Kentucky Youth Assembly, Kentucky United Nations Assembly, Boys and Girls State, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Kids Voting, Young Politicians of America clubs, and the Capitol Forum program.

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- Encourage all middle and high school student government associations to join the Kentucky Association for Student Government and the National Association for Student Government.
 - Promote active student government associations on college and university campuses.
 - Train student government associations and other campus organizations on correct parliamentary procedure.
 - Incorporate the civic journalism concept into student-run newspapers, and encourage college newspapers to take an active role in the community and political issues.
 - Encourage more high school newspapers and/or offer more journalism classes.
 - Offer civics as a major and/or minor in the Governor's Scholars Program.
 - Encourage schools to consider alternate ideas such as designating in-school hours for extra curricular activities.
 - Consider requiring sports teams to complete volunteer activities together.
 - Encourage college and university admission directors and scholarship selection committees to require evidence of civic involvement for admission and/or scholarships.
 - Encourage student involvement in political party clubs.
 - Recruit students to volunteer as poll workers and/or Kids Voting volunteers.
 - Actively promote school and campus elections.
 - Continue college and university student government associations' involvement in "Listen-up Legislators."



Professional Development

Research suggests that student achievement is directly related to teacher quality. Thus, it is essential that educators of all disciplines be provided training in government and civics best teaching practices.

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION

- **Offer an annual teacher academy as described in KRS 156.095 in the area of government and civics.**

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase teacher engagement:

- Provide incentives for teachers to attend government and civics professional development opportunities.
- Reimburse teachers that attend government and civics professional development opportunities.
- Post all government and civics professional development opportunities on the Kentucky Center for Civic Excellence website.

Support for teachers:

- Provide examples of how to use lesson plans in the classroom to meet standard and assessment needs of students.
- Develop government and civics professional development follow-up activities for participants.
- Create incentives for teachers to share the information they obtained at government and civics professional development opportunities with colleagues.
- Create an online forum on the Kentucky Center for Civic Excellence website for teachers to share information they gathered at professional development opportunities with other teachers.
- Provide more professional development opportunities on national programs like We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution, Project Citizen, and Kids Voting.
- Develop innovative ways for teachers to engage all students in civic classes.
- Provide government and civics professional development opportunities for English as a Second Language teachers.
- Provide government and civics professional development opportunities for adult educators.
- Partner with KET to produce professional development videos similar to the Project Citizen video featuring A.B. Combs Elementary.
- Hold government and civics professional development opportunities at all regional universities and community colleges during the summer.
- Provide guidance and materials for educators who teach heavily debated issues.
- Encourage community and educational organizations to follow the Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning's lead by sponsoring government and civics professional development opportunities for teachers.

- **Support for classroom volunteers:**

Provide training and/or professional development opportunities for elected officials and classroom resource persons such as law enforcement, attorneys, and social workers.

Standards and Assessment

While the CATS Blueprint should not drive classroom instruction material, the emphasis on state assessment in schools may influence where teachers focus their efforts. Therefore, attention must be paid to the CATS Blueprint. Teachers should be encouraged to plan rigorous and relevant instruction that truly integrates the study of all social studies strands to meet the larger goal of social studies which is to prepare students to become responsible global citizens who understand the interrelatedness of social studies.

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION

- *** The Workgroup strongly believes that the next time KDE revises the social studies CATS Blueprint, they should strengthen the degree to which government and civics is assessed by five percent.**

A five percent increase in the Blueprint will assist in addressing national, state, and local needs to increase the knowledge base of our citizens. Increasing the Blueprint at each assessed grade level will allow for all social studies strands to continue being assessed, with a greater emphasis on government and civics. The proposed increase in government and civics places a greater weight at elementary and middle levels while also committing to a stronger requirement at the high school level to ensure students have a continued and deeper application of government and civic content.

*Note: The Kentucky Department of Education recently revised the Blueprint. At that time, Workgroup efforts were only in their infancy and could not significantly affect the outcome.

**Current Kentucky CATS Assessment
Social Studies Blueprint for CCA version 3.0:**

Sub-domain	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 11
Government and Civics	25%	30%	20%
Culture and Society	12%	15%	10%
Economics	10%	10%	15%
Geography	25%	15%	20%
Historical Perspective	28%	30%	35%

**DRAFT Kentucky CATS Assessment
Social Studies Blueprint for CCA version 4.0:**

Sub-domain	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 11
Government and Civics	20%	30%	20%
Culture and Society	5%	10%	5%
Economics	15%	10%	11%
Geography	20%	15%	17%
Historical Perspective	40%	35%	47%

*As stated in Kentucky's Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new assessment contractor

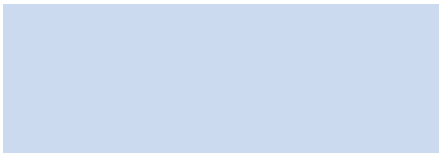
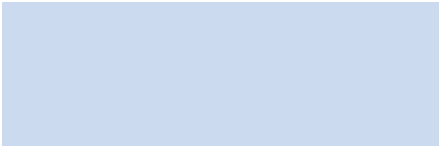
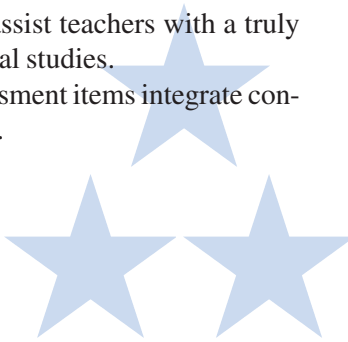
**Recommended Revised Kentucky CATS
Assessment Social Studies Blueprint for CCA
version 4.0:**

Sub-domain	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 11
Government and Civics	30%	35%	25%
Culture and Society	10%	12%	10%
Economics	10%	10%	15%
Geography	25%	13%	20%
Historical Perspective	25%	30%	30%

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Support for teachers:

- Develop instructional materials to assist teachers with a truly integrated approach to teaching social studies.
- Identify how Core Content for Assessment items integrate content within the social studies strands.



THANK YOU

2003-2005 Highlands High School We the People Team
2004-2006 Greenup County High School Student
Government Association
A.B. Combs Elementary
Big Sandy Community and Technical College
Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning
Center for Civic Education
Center on Congress at Indiana University
Eastern Kentucky University
Eastern Kentucky University Center for Kentucky History
and Politics
Harvard University Institute of Politics
Hazard Community and Technical College
Junior Achievement of Louisville
Kentucky Governor's Scholar Program
KET
Mason County Extension Office
Murray State University
National Conference of State Legislatures
New Cities Institute
Northern Kentucky University
NKU Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement
Owensboro Community and Technical College
Ralph Haile
R.C. Durr
Somerset Community and Technical College
Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America, Inc.
University of Kentucky Discovery Seminar Program
University of Kentucky First Amendment Center
University of Louisville
University of Louisville McConnell Center for Political Leadership
University of Virginia Center for Politics Youth
Leadership Initiative
Western Kentucky University

Kentucky Workgroup on Civic Literacy and Engagement

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Kentucky Supreme Court

Secretary of State Trey Grayson
Commonwealth of Kentucky

Senator Jack Westwood
Commonwealth of Kentucky

Representative Tanya Pullin
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